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Programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Office of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council and the specific resource requirements for the Office of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria for 2013 (A/67/346/Add.6). The requirements have been submitted separately from the requirements of the other 32 special political missions (see Advisory Committee's comments and observations on these missions in document A/67/604), following the completion of a needs assessment, reflecting developments on the ground since the previous report of the Secretary-General relating to the resource requirements for this Office (see A/67/346, para. 4). During its consideration of the report the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification. The comments and recommendations of the Committee relating to the requirements for this special political mission are set out below.

2. By its resolution 66/253 A, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General and all relevant United Nations bodies to support the efforts of the League of Arab States, both through good offices aimed at promoting a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis, including through the appointment of a special envoy, and through technical and material assistance, in consultation with the League of Arab States (resolution 66/253, para. 11).

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3. On 23 February 2012, the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the League of Arab States announced the appointment of Kofi Annan as their Joint Special Envoy on the Syrian crisis to work closely with all stakeholders and the international community to end the violence and the humanitarian crisis and facilitate a peaceful Syrian-led and inclusive political solution that meets the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people through a comprehensive political dialogue between the Syrian Government and the whole spectrum of the Syrian opposition (A/67/346/Add.6, para. 3). The Office of the Joint Special Envoy was subsequently established in Geneva (see A/66/354/Add.7, para. 7).

4. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 66/263, approved the total amount of $7,488,000 net ($7,932,200 gross), which was appropriated for the 10-month period ending 31 December 2012, including salaries and common staff costs for 18 positions and that the initial resource requirements for the Office of the Joint Special Envoy were funded through the unforeseen and extraordinary expenditures mechanism of the Secretary-General (see A/66/7/Add.24, para. 10).

5. In addition, the Advisory Committee also recalls that, in April 2012, following the adoption of its resolutions 2042 (2012) and 2043 (2012), the Security Council established the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) with an initial deployment of up to 300 unarmed military observers as well as an appropriate civilian component. As violence on the ground intensified and spread, however, the Security Council decided to extend the Mission's mandate by a final period of only 30 days, expressing, in its resolution 2059 (2012), its willingness to renew the mandate of UNSMIS thereafter only in the event of confirmation of the cessation of the use of heavy weapons and a reduction in the level of violence by all sides sufficient to allow UNSMIS to implement its mandate (see Security Council resolution 2059 (2012), para. 3). The Council did not subsequently renew the mandate of UNSMIS, leading to its liquidation on 19 August 2012.

6. Mr. Annan resigned as Joint Special Envoy on 2 August 2012 and on 17 August the Secretary-General appointed Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi as the Joint Special Representative. Mr. Brahimi's appointment was later welcomed by the League of Arab States in its resolution 7523 dated 5 September 2012.

7. The report of the Secretary-General indicates that the activities of the Joint Special Representative in 2012 and 2013 are expected to include: (a) the use of good offices aimed at bringing an end to violence and human rights violations and at facilitating a Syrian-led peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis; and (b) work with all relevant entities and the League of Arab States to provide support to efforts to end the violence and promote a political solution, including through consultations and close contacts with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and other relevant United Nations agencies; and (c) briefings to the Security Council, the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations bodies, as well as the relevant bodies in the League of Arab States (A/67/346/Add.6, para. 11). Concerning the nature of the Office and its reporting lines, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that its joint nature was primarily political, with the United Nations and the League of Arab States pooling together their good offices in order to facilitate a solution to the Syrian crisis. In this connection, the Committee was also informed that, in addition to his regular briefings to the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, Mr. Brahimi had briefed the Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States on 20 October and 12 November 2012 on the work of the Office.

8. The Advisory Committee recalls its previous observations concerning the need for clarity with regard to the respective roles and functions of the different United Nations entities on the ground in Syria, including that of the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators (see A/66/7/Add.24, para. 6). In this connection, the Committee notes the detail outlined in paragraph 12 of the Secretary-General's report that the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are co-chairing an inter-agency task force bringing all relevant United Nations entities under one umbrella in an effort to provide more efficient support to address and respond to any issues related to the crisis. The Committee was informed upon enquiry that, due to the complex and dynamic circumstances on the ground, the United Nations country team has reoriented its work from development to humanitarian response. In this connection, the Committee is aware that the World Food Programme is currently providing food assistance to over 850,000 individuals, with approximately 1.5 million people identified as being in need of urgent food assistance over the next three to six months. The Joint Special Representative informed the Committee that access to aid recipients was, on occasion, facilitated through activation of the network of contacts maintained by the Office of the Joint Special Representative. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the efforts made to ensure close collaboration and coordination between the different United Nations entities working in the Syrian Arab Republic. In this regard, the Committee looks forward to receiving additional details concerning the work of the related inter-agency task force and a clear description of the activities, roles and functions of the different United Nations entities deployed in-country in future budget submissions on the resource requirements for the Office of the Joint Special Representative.**

9. The Office's planning assumptions for 2013, contained in paragraphs 16 to 25 of the report, include a proposal for a structure of 79 civilian personnel (31 substantive, 13 support, 35 security) and two Government-provided personnel in the capacity of military advisers (A/67/346/Add.6, para. 17). It is indicated that the Office of the Joint Special Representative will relocate its headquarters from Geneva to Cairo, and establish an office in Damascus. The Joint Special Representative informed the Committee that this relocation was already under way. Of the 79 positions proposed, 25 will be located in Cairo, 51 in Damascus and 3 in New York to provide backstopping support (ibid., para. 18). The Secretary-General also indicates that the logistical support capabilities of the regional Middle East missions (see para. 18 below), as well as UNDP will be leveraged in the ongoing provision of critical administrative support and logistics coordination to the Office's support component deployed to Cairo and Damascus (ibid., para. 19). The Secretary-General also indicates in his report that there will be no infrastructure programme and that appropriate premises will be available for the mission on a cost-reimbursable basis. Funding estimates include requirements for alterations to make the facilities compliant with the minimum operating security standards (ibid., para. 22). Additional assets and critical supplies will include those made available from the liquidation of UNSMIS (ibid., para. 23). The Secretary-General also indicates that travel will be undertaken by commercial means or on an ad hoc charter basis with no resulting requirement for dedicated air assets (ibid., para 24). Upon request, the Advisory Committee was informed that the principal entry points to the Syrian-based component of the Office would be through Cairo and Beirut due to their proximity.

10. In view of the relocation of the Office's headquarters to Cairo, the establishment of a presence in Damascus and the performance of certain civilian functions previously undertaken by UNSMIS, the Advisory Committee was provided, upon request, with detail concerning the proposed redeployment, reclassification and revised location of the positions for the Office of the Joint Special Representative for 2013. This information is outlined in the annex to the present report. The Committee was also informed that, as of the beginning of December 2012, five substantive staff were already located in Cairo, including the Joint Special Representative and his Deputy. The office in Damascus is currently composed of nine substantive staff, seven support staff and 23 security personnel. It was indicated that 35 personnel located in Damascus had transferred directly from UNSMIS to the Office of the Joint Special Representative. Two additional staff were carrying out functions for the Office of the Joint Special Representative, pending assignment, at the time of the Committee's review. Specific comments on the posts and resources requested are presented below.

11. The total proposed resource requirements for the Office for the one-year period ending 31 December 2013 amount to $12,261,800 net ($12,964,200 gross), including salaries and common staff costs for 79 positions for the 12-month period ($6,293,900), as well as operational costs ($5,967,900), comprising Government-provided personnel ($94,200), consultants ($200,000), official travel ($2,057,400), facilities and infrastructure ($1,324,300), ground transportation ($233,400), communications ($740,000) and information technology ($28,600), as well as other supplies, services and equipment ($1,290,000). The Secretary-General explains that the $4,773,800 variance between the 2013 proposed requirements and the 2012 appropriation for the Office of the Joint Special Envoy is mainly due to the increase in the staffing complement (an increase of 28 international positions and 33 local level positions). The increase in operational costs is mainly due to required satellite communications and the need to pay rent for premises in Damascus and Cairo and also to make the facilities compliant with the minimum operating security standards set by the Department of Safety and Security.

12. The supplementary information provided to the Advisory Committee includes a description of the proposed 79 positions and their functions. The 15-person substantive component of the proposed headquarters office in Cairo, which includes 10 redeployed staff from the previous Office of the Joint Special Envoy and five new positions, is composed of one Joint Special Representative (Under-Secretary-General), and one Deputy Joint Special Representative (Assistant Secretary-General), 1 D-1 (Chief of Staff), one Director of Political Affairs (D-1), one Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5), one Spokesperson/Public Information Officer (P-5), a Special Assistant to the Joint Special Representative (P-4), a Special Assistant to the Deputy Joint Special Representative (P-4), a Political Affairs Officer (P-4), two Political Affairs Officers (P-3), two Staff Assistants to the Joint Special Representative and his Deputy (Field Service), and two Administrative Assistants (Local level).

13. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with additional details concerning the functions of the two P-3 Political Affairs Officer positions. It was clarified that one will engage with the multiple Syrian opposition groups located in Egypt and elsewhere. The same officer will support liaison with respective embassies and Governments and with other embassies in Egypt. The other P-3 will support engagement with the League of Arab States and liaison with the host

Government. **The Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's substantive staffing proposal for the Office of the Joint Special Representative to be headquartered in Cairo and the related redeployment of 10 positions previously assigned to the Office of the Joint Special Envoy in Geneva.**

14. As of 14 November 2012, the supplementary information also indicates that the office in Damascus requires 13 substantive positions, including the redeployment of three staff from the previous Office of the Joint Special Envoy and 10 new positions, comprising one Head of Mission (D-2), two Senior Political Affairs Officers (P-5), three Political Affairs Officers (one P-4, two P-3), two Human Rights Officers (one P-4, and one P-3), one Public Information Officer (P-4), one Staff Assistant to the Head of Mission (Field Service) and three Administrative Assistants (Local level).

15. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with additional details concerning the functions of the three Political Affairs Officer positions and the two Human Rights Officer positions. The Committee was informed that the number and the diversity of interlocutors required three Political Affairs Officers in order to fully assess the continually evolving dynamics of the conflict. With regard to the human rights positions, the Committee was informed that the gravity of the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic required a capacity sufficient to ensure that the various stakeholders were made aware of their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law. **On the question of the requested administrative support posts, the Committee is of the view that the request for three Administrative Assistant positions (Local level), within the substantive component in Damascus is excessive given the relatively small size of the office. The Committee could not be provided with a clear explanation justifying this request, specifically in terms of the application of administrative support ratios in offices of comparable size and function. The Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's substantive staffing request for the presence of the Office of the Joint Special Representative in Damascus, including those positions redeployed from the Office of the Joint Special Envoy in Geneva, with the exception of one of the three Administrative Assistant (Local level) positions. Future budget submissions should ensure adequate justification for all requested positions.**

16. The substantive staffing request also includes a provision for three positions in New York to provide backstopping to the mission (1 P-5 Senior Political Affairs Officer, 1 P-4 Political Affairs Officer and 1 General Service (Other level) Administrative Assistant). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the two Professional positions currently exist and have been funded from extrabudgetary resources to date. However, the Secretary-General also indicated that since funding these positions from voluntary contributions does not guarantee their availability over the lifespan of the mission, he was therefore seeking the creation of the posts from regular budget sources. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Department of Political Affairs has sought $3.13 million in extrabudgetary resources in support of the work of the Office to cover unforeseen or expanded activities during the course of the year.

17. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls its previous comments on Headquarters backstopping of special political missions (A/66/7/Add.21, paras. 57-83), in the context of its review of the arrangements for funding and

backstopping special political missions. Specifically, the Committee indicated its view that a decision to fund Headquarters backstopping through individual mission budgets blurs the distinction between the resources necessary for mandate delivery in the field and those required for backstopping (ibid., para. 75). The Committee also notes, however, that the General Assembly has deferred full consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals in this regard and subsequently the Committee's advice thereon. **The Committee recommends the establishment of the two Professional-level positions required for backstopping the Office of the Joint Special Representative at Headquarters. It does not, however, support the creation of an Administrative Assistant position at Headquarters and recommends that the existing resources available to the Department of Political Affairs be utilized to provide the required administrative support services. Furthermore, it recommends that the use of all voluntary contributions be transparently disclosed and reported in future budget submissions in order to limit the possibility of duplication and overlap.**

18. Concerning the Office's support staffing arrangements, the Advisory Committee was informed that efforts are being made to achieve efficiencies and lighten the deployment footprint in the Syrian Arab Republic and Egypt. This will include, for example, the pooling of driver functions (A/67/346/Add.6, para. 19). Furthermore, the Committee was provided with a detailed list of support functions and tasks that would be undertaken by the Office and others that would be provided by the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and UNDP. A number of memorandums or letters of understanding were under discussion and preparation with the prospective service providers in this regard. Upon request, the Committee was informed that the proportion of mission support staff to the total staffing complement (13 support staff out of a total staff of 79 plus two military advisers) was relatively light when compared with operations of a comparable size and mandate. However, the Committee could not be provided with any benchmarks or prescribed ratios in this regard.

19. In terms of the specific support staffing requirements, the supplementary information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that the support staff of the Office will be comprised of 13 positions (5 in Cairo and 8 in Damascus), including three redeployed positions from the Office of the Joint Special Envoy and 10 new positions. These include one Chief of Mission Support to be based in Cairo (P-5) and one Administrative Officer (P-4) for the office in Damascus. The Cairo office would also require one Logistics Officer (Field Service), two Logistics Assistants (Local level) and one Administrative Assistant (Local level) while the office in Damascus would also require one Administrative Officer (Field Service), one Logistics Officer (Field Service), one Administrative/Financial Assistant (Field Service), one Administrative Assistant (Field Service), one Logistics Assistant (Local level) and two new Administrative Assistants (Local level). **The Advisory Committee welcomes the efforts to minimize the footprint of administrative and logistical support functions in Cairo and Damascus with a view to improving efficiency and effectiveness and looks forward to a progress report in the next budgetary submission on the experience gained from relying on existing United Nations capacities from within the region (see para. 17 above) through the establishment of service agreements. It recommends approval of the Secretary-General's staffing proposals in this regard, including three positions redeployed**

from the Office of the Joint Special Envoy in Geneva. Given the evolving nature of the situation on the ground, the mission should keep overall staffing levels and the deployment to different locations under close review.

20. As of 14 November 2012, the supplementary financial information provided to the Advisory Committee also indicates a requirement for 35 security positions (5 in Cairo and 30 in Damascus). This is composed of 10 Security Officers (1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 8 Field Service), one Security Analyst (P-3), two Security Liaison Officers (Field Service), three Security Assistants (Local level), one Guard Supervisor (Local level), 10 local Security Guards (Local level) and eight drivers (Local level). **The Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's staffing proposals for the security component of the Office.**

21. The Secretary-General's supplementary financial information also provides projected requirements of $5,967,000 for operational costs, including provisions for official travel ($2,057,400), office space ($1,324,300) and other supplies, services and equipment ($1,290,000). Concerning the funds requested for official travel, the Advisory Committee was provided, upon request, with a detailed breakdown of the forecast requirements, which indicated a series of trips from Cairo to Damascus for 23 staff, which exceeds the projected totality of the Cairo-based substantive staffing component. The Committee was also informed that the provision for office supplies, services and equipment included funds set aside in the event that the Office may be requested to organize mediation meetings to negotiate a political settlement. The Committee was informed that such meetings, should they take place, will, for security reasons most likely occur outside the Syrian Arab Republic and require extensive participation from a large number of stakeholders. The amount requested for office space also included a provision for $700,000 to allow for the renovation and alteration of facilities in Cairo and Damascus in order to make both compliant with the minimum operating security standards set by the Department of Safety and Security. **The Committee notes the need for flexibility in terms of the requirements for operational costs and in view of the evolving situation on the ground. It therefore recommends approval of the resources proposed for the Office's operational costs but also recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to seek efficiencies where possible with respect to official travel.**

Recommendation

22. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the Secretary-General's request for resources for the Office of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria, subject to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 15 and 17 above.**

Annex

Proposed staffing of the Office of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria: 2012-2013

	Geneva		Cairo			Damascus			Department of Political Affairs: New York
Type	*Substantive*		*Substantive*	*Support*	*Security*	*Substantive*	*Support*	*Security*	*Substantive*
Redeploy/ reclassify	-1 USG	Joint Special Envoy	1 USG	Joint Special Representative					
Redeploy/ reclassify	-1 ASG	Deputy Joint Special Envoy	1 ASG	Deputy Joint Special Representative					
Abolish	**-1 ASG**	**Deputy Joint Special Envoy**							
Redeploy	-1 D2	Chief of Staff	1 D1	Chief of Staff					
Redeploy/ reclassify	-1 D2	Director Communication	1 D1	Director Political Affairs					
Redeploy	-1 P5	Senior Political Affairs	1 P5	Senior Political Affairs					
Redeploy/ reclassify	-1 P5	Senior Political Affairs	1 P5	Spokesperson/ Public Information Officer					
Redeploy/ reclassify	-1 P5	Senior Administrative Officer			1 P5 Chief of Mission Support				
Redeploy	-1 P4	Political Affairs	1 P4	Political Affairs					
Redeploy	-1 P4	Political Affairs				1 P4	Political Affairs		
Redeploy	-1 P3	Political Affairs	1 P3	Political Affairs					
Redeploy/ reclassify	-1 P3	Information Officer				1 P3	Political Affairs		
Redeploy/ reclassify	-1 GS (PL)	Personal Assistant to Joint Special Envoy	1 FS	Staff Assistant					
Redeploy/ reclassify	-1 GS (PL)	Administrative Assistant	1 FS	Staff Assistant					

	Geneva		Cairo						Damascus						Department of Political Affairs: New York	
Type	*Substantive*		*Substantive*		*Support*		*Security*		*Substantive*		*Support*		*Security*		*Substantive*	
Redeploy/ reclassify	-1	GS (OL) Secretary									1	FS Administrative/ Finance Assistant				
Redeploy/ reclassify	-1	GS (OL) Secretary							1	FS Staff Assistant						
Redeploy/ reclassify	-1	GS (OL) Secretary									1	FS Administrative Assistant				
Redeploy/ reclassify	-1	GS (SL) Security Officer					1	FS Security Officer								
			10		1		1		3		2					
New			1	P3 Political Affairs Officer	1	FS Logistics Officer	1	FS Security Officer	1	D2 Head of Mission	1	P4 Administrative Officer	1	P4 Security Officer	1	P5 Senior Political Affairs Officer
New			1	P4 Special Assistant (JSR)	1	NGS Administrative Assistant	1	NGS Security Assistant	1	P5 Senior Political Affairs	1	FS Logistics Officer	1	P3 Security Officer	1	P4 Political Affairs Officer
New			1	P4 Special Assistant (DJSR)	1	NGS Logistics Assistant	1	NGS Driver	1	P5 Political Affairs Adviser	1	FS Administrative Officer	1	P3 Security Analyst	1	GS Administrative Assistant
New			1	NGS Administrative Assistant	1	NGS Logistics Assistant	1	NGS Driver	1	P3 Political Affairs Officer	1	NGS Logistics Assistant	1	FS Security Officer		
New			1	NGS Administrative Assistant					1	P4 Human Rights Officer	1	NGS Administrative Assistant	1	FS Security Officer		
New									1	P3 Human Rights Officer	1	NGS Administrative Assistant	1	FS Security Officer		
New									1	P4 Public Information			1	FS Security Officer		
New									1	NGS Administrative Assistant			1	FS Security Officer		
New									1	NGS Administrative Assistant			1	FS Security Officer		
													2	FS Security Liaison Officer		
New									1	NGS Administrative Assistant			1	NGS Security Officer		

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	Geneva	Cairo			Damascus				Department of Political Affairs: New York	
Type	*Substantive*	*Substantive*	*Support*	*Security*	*Substantive*	*Support*	*Security*		*Substantive*	
New							1 NGS	Security Officer		
New							1 NGS	Driver		
New							1 NGS	Driver		
							1 NGS	Driver		
							1 NGS	Driver		
							1 NGS	Driver		
							1 NGS	Driver		
							2 NGS	Guards		
							8 NGS	Guards		
							1 NGS	Guard supervisor		**Net change**
	-18	**15**	**5**	**5**	**13**	**8**	**30**		**3**	**61**
		25				**51**				**3**
					79					

Note: In addition to the posts currently encumbered, a number of posts are pending assignment, with temporary duty arrangements in place pending the finalization of recruitment activities.

Abbreviations: ASG=Assistant Secretary-General; USG=Under-Secretary-General; NGS=National General Service; GS (PL)=General Service (Principal level); GS (OL)=General Service (Other level); GS (SL)=General Service (Security Service level); FS=Field Service.